

At Levens CE School, we believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide and therefore, from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted on as quickly as possible.

AIMS

School aims to ensure that:

- All pupils have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the National Curriculum.

It is recognised that:

- The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn to socialise with their peers and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.
- Sometimes pupils and parents may need to be supported and rewarded in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act).

EXPECTATIONS

School expects that all our pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day as stated in our Home/School Agreement which parents are asked to sign when their child starts school.

School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible.
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/children attend school.
- Contact school, as soon as is practical and in any case before 9am, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- early contact when a pupil is absent without explanation
- action on any attendance problem notified to the school
- referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate

We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear, communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with governors, parents and pupils.
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session.
- Attendance certificates at the end of each term.

The school responds to non-attendance by:

- Contacting parents on the first day of an absence, by telephone, if no reason has been received.
- If there is no response, a letter will be sent to enquire about the unexplained absence.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance or persistent lateness is emerging, the parent/carer will be contacted by school and the issues causing non-attendance or lateness will be discussed at an attendance panel meeting.
- If the action plan generated at the attendance panel meeting fails to improve the child's attendance, a full assessment of the children's needs and family circumstances will be completed using the common assessment framework.

The headteacher will then contact the Local Authority Inclusion Officer' explaining the actions and support provided so far and will discuss the possibility of an attendance review conference.

The Local Authority will then decide on appropriate enforcement/prosecution procedures to be taken specific to the case.

In accordance with our Supervision of Pupils Procedure, the expectation is that children should arrive on site in the morning no earlier than 8.35am and ready for the bell at 8.45 am.

Registration is at 8.45 am.

Children arriving after 8.45 am will be recorded as 'late'.

HOLIDAY ABSENCE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Since September 2013, Headteachers have not been able to grant leave of absence in term time except in exceptional circumstances. The most recent advice from the Local Authority states:

'In considering a request, the school will take into account the child's age, the time of year of the absence and the nature of the visit. The Headteacher will also consider the child's stage of education and progress and the child's overall attendance record. Headteachers will not authorise absence unless they believe your circumstances are exceptional. Case law identifies that any holiday or event that can be arranged during school holiday periods should not be authorised during the school term.'

The impact of poor attendance has been extensively researched in the UK. Pupil absence figures and both GCSE and primary school test results highlight the importance of clamping down on pupil absence to ensure more pupils regularly attend school, and ultimately leave with the qualifications needed to succeed in

modern Britain. A Department of Education report published in 2015 clearly outlined the impact of low attendance: *'Primary pupils with no absence are around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level of attainment and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level than pupils that missed 15-20% of key stage 2.'*

The Government has issued a list of exceptional reasons which are as follows:

- Family needs arising from service in the armed forces or from a parent working abroad
- Family bereavements
- Exceptional family ceremonies
- A holiday necessitated due to disability or illness in the family.

Schools are advised that the cost of holidays, work rotas of parents and working in tourism, farming can no longer be considered to be exceptional reasons.

We do have concerns, as do other Headteachers, that families may feel they cannot share with schools that they plan to take time off during term time. This could mean that children will not be able to share any experiences they may have had and it could even encourage them to lie about their absence. This is not a situation we would want any of our families or children to be in.

Not sharing planned absence from school could also lead to safeguarding issues; if families have not informed school that they are taking a break and school cannot contact them for an explanation of absence; school may need to take steps to ensure the children and family are safe and well.

Therefore, if parents are intending to take time out of school during term time and believe the circumstances to be exceptional, please state it in a letter to the headteacher. If appropriate, parents will then be invited into school to have a meeting with the headteacher. Parents will be informed in writing of decisions about whether planned absences are to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

This policy was produced in conjunction with staff and governors during the autumn term 2015 to ensure we meet our statutory responsibilities and make us consistent with our cluster schools. It was presented to and accepted by the Governing Body's Curriculum and staffing subcommittee on 15th October 2015 and the Full Governing Body Board on 3rd December 2015.

Signed: Ray Gillard
Chair of Governors

Date: 14.12.18

Review Date: Autumn 2021 or before if required